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ABSTRACT

This book explores the link between school character and school improvement. It focuses on the construction of a schooling system based on layered loyalties and shared accountability, ideas that build on local initiatives and concerns without compromising the interests of stakeholders. Chapter 1 examines the role that culture plays in providing a unique framework for each school. Chapter 2 then discusses the link between school character, in the form of a thriving "lifeworld," and school effectiveness. School effectiveness is defined as a school's ability to achieve higher levels of thoughtfulness among its students, thoughtfulness characterized by caring and civility. The third chapter examines the virtues that undergird the profession of teaching, and provides a case study of how these virtues are manifest in a public school. Chapter 4 looks at the challenges in trying to honor diversity and unity, whereas chapter 5 discusses the impact of standards and assessments on the lifeworlds of schools and communities. A broader view of assessment is presented in chapter 6. Chapter 7 turns to the themes of teachers, their work, and their learning, and the last two chapters look at change strategies and the relationship of leadership to democracy and the lifeworld. Two appendices offer excerpts from sample external reviews. (Contains an index and 174 references.) (RJM)

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